

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 SAJ-01

IO-10 ACDA-05 OMB-01 TRSE-00 /076 W

----- 115236

P R 212101Z NOV 75

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5443

INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

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AMEMBASSY HELSINKI

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AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

AMEMBASSY VIENNA

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 30521

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, FR, IT , XG

SUBJECT: JOINT DECLARATION OF FRENCH AND ITALIAN
COMMUNIST PARTIES

REF: ROME 17027

SUMMARY: THE JOINT DECLARATION SERVES TO REASSURE
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FRENCH VOTERS ABOUT THE PCF'S REASONABLENESS BY

LINKING THE PCF TO THE APPARENTLY MORE MODERATE PCI. IT ALSO HELPS THE PCF IN ITS DRIVE TO STAKE OUT AN INDEPENDENT/NON-SOVIET POSITION IN PREPARATION FOR THE CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN COMMUNIST PARTIES. FINALLY, COMING ON THE EVE OF THE PCF'S XXIIND CONGRESS IN FEBRUARY, IT ALLOWS THE PCF TO CLAIM THAT ITS ANALYSIS OF EVENTS HAS RECEIVED THE BLESSING OF A BROTHER PARTY WHICH IS MORE POPULAR HERE THAN ANY OTHER. COMMENTING ON THE DECLARATION, PCF SECRETARY-GENERAL GEORGES MARCHAIS WORKED HARD TO EMPHASIZE THE GLOBAL NATURE OF THE ECONOMIC CRISIS, CONTINUED HIS ATTACKS ON AMERICAN IMPERIALISM AND, CURIOUSLY ENOUGH, ENDED HIS ACCOUNT OF THE DECLARATION WITH A REFERENCE TO DETENTE, THE FIRST TIME HE HAS MENTIONED THE SUBJECT WITH APPROVAL IN RECENT MONTHS. END SUMMARY.

1) THE LOGICAL NECESSITY: WHILE THE TWO COMMUNIST PARTIES HAVE LONG BEEN CONSIDERED AS INCOMPATIBLE, THERE ARE SOME PRESSURES WORKING ON BOTH WHICH TEND TO BRING THEM TOGETHER. BOTH PARTIES HAVE DEFINITELY DROPPED ANY THOUGHT THAT POWER CAN BE ACQUIRED BY REVOLUTIONARY MEANS. BOTH HAVE ACCEPTED THE AXIOM THAT THE CONQUEST OF POWER THROUGH THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS WILL REQUIRE MORE THAN JUST WORKING-CLASS VOTES. BOTH HAVE THEREFORE DECIDED TO SEEK ALLIANCES WITH OTHER POLITICAL GROUPS AND TO HUNT FOR ALLIES ALL THROUGH THE VARIOUS ECONOMIC STRATA OF THEIR SOCIETIES. FORCED TO ALLY THEMSELVES WITH WHAT FRENCH WRITERS CALL THE "HEREDITARY ENEMY" OF CHRISTIAN DEMOCRACY, ALREADY EXERCISING POWER IN THE REGIONS, THE ITALIAN COMMUNISTS HAVE BEEN FOR SOME TIME CONSIDERED AS RESPONSIBLE AND REASSURING BY THE FRENCH. AND THE SUPPORT OF SUCH MODERATION IS IMPORTANT TO MARCHAIS, WHO APPEARS TORN BETWEEN THE NEED TO KEEP HIS PARTY'S IDEOLOGICAL CREDENTIALS ALIVE IN THE FACE OF SOCIALIST GAINS AND THE DESIRE TO SEDUCE AN EVER-WIDER CIRCLE OF FRENCH VOTERS. BY CLAIMING THAT THERE IS AN ENTENTE AMONG WESTERN EUROPEAN PARTIES ON THE ROAD CALLED "SEPARATE DEVELOPMENT," MARCHAIS SEEMS ABLE TO GAIN SOME LEFT LEGITIMACY FOR HIS STANDS WHILE STILL BEING REASSURING

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AND RESPONSIBLE BY ASSOCIATION.

2. THE EUROPEAN CONFERENCE OF COMMUNIST PARTIES: FROM MOSCOW'S POINT OF VIEW, MARCHAIS MUST SURELY HAVE PROVEN HIMSELF TO BE OBSTREPEROUS ON THE CONFERENCE. WHILE THE SOVIET UNION IS BEING READ IN FRANCE AS HAVING WANTED A NEAT AND SIMPLE ENDORSEMENT FOR DETENTE, MARCHAIS IS INSISTING ON A REPEAT OF THE PREPARATIONS

FOR THE JUNE, 1969 CONFERENCE. THE PCF HAS BEEN LOUD
IN ITS CALLS FOR A REVIEW OF THE WESTERN PARTIES'
SEPARATE DEVELOPMENT (REJECTION OF REVOLUTIONARY MEANS
FOR ATTAINING POWER; THE POLICY OF COMMON FRONTS) AND
MAY WELL BE FEELING THE NEED TO WARN MOSCOW OF ITS
COMMITMENT ON THIS POINT. MARCHAIS IS KILLING TWO
BIRDS WITH A SINGLE STONE; BY THE AGREEMENT WITH THE
PCI HE IS GIVING A RELATIVELY NON-COMMITTAL PAPER
ENDORSEMENT TO DETENTE, ALWAYS POPULAR IN FRANCE, AND
THUS PROVING HIS LOYALTY TO MOSCOW'S POLICY. BUT HE
IS ALSO RAISING THE WARNING THAT THE TWO MOST DYNAMIC
COMMUNIST PARTIES IN WESTERN EUROPE HAVE LAID OUT A

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COURSE OF DEVELOPMENT WHICH THEY EXPECT TO FOLLOW AND WHICH THEY WANT TO SEE ENDORSED. NO ONE IS MISSING THE FACT THAT MOSCOW PLAYED NO PART IN THIS ARRANGEMENT.

3) DETENTE: IN A MAJOR SPEECH AT PAU ON NOVEMBER L9, MARCHAIS LINKED HIS CRITICISMS OF THE RAMBOUILLET
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SUMMIT WITH AN EXEGESIS OF THE JOINT DECLARATION. AS QUOTED BY L'HUMANITE, MARCHAIS' COMMENTS ON DETENTE WERE AS FOLLOWS: "WE WERE IN AGREEMENT ... ON THE PROGRESS OF DETENTE AND PEACEFUL COOPERATION AND ON THE NEED TO AFFIRM THAT IT (DETENTE) DOES NOT CONSTITUTE A SOCIAL AND POLITICAL STATUS QUO' ON THE NEED TO TAKE ON NEW ACTIONS IN THE PURSUIT OF PEACE, DISARMAMENT AND FOR THE DISSOLUTION OF THE MILITARY BLOCS." THE FINAL PLURAL, ALREADY ENSHRINED IN THE COMMON PROGRAM MUCH TO THE SOVIET UNION'S DISTASTE, WILL NOT GO UNNOTICED. IN HIS DEALINGS WITH MOSCOW, MARCHAIS WILL BE ABLE TO POINT TO THE DECLARATION AND HIS READING OF IT AS AN ENDORSEMENT OF MOSCOW'S GOALS; TO HIS FRENCH RANK AND FILE HE WILL BE ABLE TO SAY THAT HE DID NOT NEGLECT A CHANCE TO CONTINUE THE PCF'S TRADITIONAL SUSPICION OF THE WEST AND TO THE PS, MARCHAIS WILL BE ABLE TO NOTE HIS OPPOSITION TO BOTH MILITARY BLOCS.

4. THE WESTERN EUROPEAN ROAD: ROME'S ASSESSMENT (REFTEL, PARA 11) OF THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS FACTOR IN PCF MOTIVATION STRIKES US AS ACCURATE. THE PCF HAS PLAYED A NEGATIVE ROLE IN GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS OF SOUTHERN AND WESTERN EUROPEAN DEVELOPMENTS ON THE LEFT: THE PCF HAS SO FAR REFUSED MITTERRAND'S INVITATION TO DISCUSS SOUTHERN EUROPE AT LANCHE AND HAS POSTPONED ACCEPTANCE OF SOARES' INVITATION TO THE EIGHT PARTY CONFERENCE. YET MARCHAIS NEEDS THE SUPPORT WHICH A GENERAL DECLARATION OF A SEPARATE ROAD WOULD GIVE TO THE PCF'S PARTICIPATION IN THE UNITED LEFT, AND HE WANTS TO LEAD THAT GENERAL DECLARATION. WHEN YOU CAN'T LEAD' SOMETIMES IT IS BETTER TO DECLARE JOINTLY.

5. MARCHAIS SELLS THE DECLARATION TO HIS TROOPS: IN

THE PAU SPEECH, MARCHAIS STRESSED THE DECLARATION'S STATEMENTS ON DEMOCRACY, LIBERTY (BUT WITHOUT MENTIONING EVEN ONCE THE IDEA OF PLURALISM), AMERICAN IMPERIALISM AND DETENTE. HE IGNORED THE DECLARATION'S STATEMENTS ON RELATIONS WITH SOCIALIST AND CHRISTIAN FORCES, CONTENTING HIMSELF WITH A STATEMENT OF ACCORD BETWEEN THE TWO PARTIES "ON TAKING NEW INITIATIVES TO

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BRING ABOUT PROGRESS IN THE COMMON ACTIONS OF SOCIALIST AND COMMUNIST PARTIES, (AND) IN ALL THE DEMOCRATIC AND PROGRESSIVE FORCES OF CAPITALIST EUROPE." MARCHAIS' MAJOR POINT WAS RESERVED FOR THE ECONOMIC CRISIS WHICH HE ONCE AGAIN CALLED THE MAJOR PROGRAM OF DEMOCRATIC DEVELOPMENT. THE THEME IS OLD IN FRANCE; MARCHAIS HAS BEEN USING IT SINCE OCTOBER 1974, AND HE ADDED NOTHING NEW TO WHAT HE HAS BEEN SAYING OVER THE PAST YEAR. IN SHORT, THE TROOPS ARE BEING TOLD THOSE THINGS WHICH MAKE THE PCF MORE PALATABLE TO MODERATES, WITHOUT GOING SO FAR AS TO GIVE ANY COMFORT TO THE FRENCH SOCIALISTS.

6. COMMENT: THE DECLARATION IS A USEFUL TOOL FOR THE PCF. IT OFFERS A REASSURING BACKDROP FOR VIEWING A PARTY WHICH BADLY SCARED FRENCH VOTERS WITH ITS INTEMPERATE STATEMENTS ON PORTUGAL LAST SUMMER. IT GIVES MARCHAIS AN ARM IN HIS CONTINUING ATTEMPT TO RESHAPE THE CONGRESS OF COMMUNIST PARTIES MORE TO HIS LIKING. AND IT IS FLEXIBLE ENOUGH TO ALLOW HIM TO USE IT IN HIS RELATIONS WITH THE SOCIALISTS WITHOUT BEING COMMITTED TO ANYTHING NEW. BUT ITS IMPORTANCE TO THE PCF SHOULD NOT BE OVERSTATED. IT ADDS VERY LITTLE THAT IS NEW TO THE USUAL PCF LINE AND IT APPEARS TO HAVE COST THE PCF RELATIVELY LITTLE. LIKE MANY OF THE DECLARATIONS WHICH THE PCF HAS SIGNED IN RECENT YEARS, IT'S A USEFUL GRACE NOTE; UNLIKE MANY OF THEM, IT WILL REASSURE SOME UNCOMMITTED VOTERS.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLICIES, PARTY LINE, COMMUNISTS, POLITICAL PARTIES, COMMUNIST DOCTRINE, DECLARATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 21 NOV 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: CunninFX
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975PARIS30521
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750406-0798
From: PARIS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19751120/aaaaarnz.tel
Line Count: 266
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 ROME 17027
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: CunninFX
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 03 APR 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <03 APR 2003 by ShawDG>; APPROVED <02 OCT 2003 by CunninFX>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: JOINT DECLARATION OF FRENCH AND ITALIAN COMMUNIST PARTIES
TAGS: PFOR, PINT, FR, IT, XG
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006